GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:150
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2001
INDO-PAK DIALOGUE
ASHOK KUMAR PATEL;MADHAVRAO SCINDIA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Foreign Minister gave a response to the Prime Minister`s New Year Eve-musing on Kashmir, indicating an expectation for a purposeful dialogue between India and Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details of Prime Minister`s observations, referred to as New Year Eve-musing on Kashmir and the Pakistan`s response thereto; and

(c) the efforts being made to resolve various issues pending between India and Pakistan?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a)-(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (A) TO (C) OF THE ANSWER TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 15(ANSWER ON 7.3.2001

In his article titled `Kumarakom Musings` appearing in January 2001 Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, wrote,`The Kashmir problem is an unfortunate inheritance from the tragic partition of India in 1947. India never accepted the pernicious Two-Nation theory that brought about the partition. However, the mindset that created Pakistan continues to operate in that country. This is why it is continuing with its untenable policy on Kashmir, disregarding the considerations of both good neighbourly relations with India and the well being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

India is willing and ready to seek a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. Towards this end, we are prepared to recommence talks with Pakistan at any level, including the highest level, provided Islamabad gives sufficient proof of its preparedness to create a conducive atmosphere for a meaningful dialogue. I am sad to note, however, that the Government of Pakistan is not doing enough to rein-in terrorist organizations based on its soil that are continuing their killing spree, targeting both innocent civilians and our security personnel in Kashmir and other parts of India`.

He also wrote, `In our search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem, both in its external and internal dimensions, we shall not traverse solely on the beaten track of the past. Rather, we shall be bold and innovative designers of a future architecture of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian region. In this search, the sole light that will guide us is our commitment to peace, justice and the vital interests of the nation.`

There has been no formal statement from Pakistan. However, several comments attributed to Pakistani leaders have appeared in the Pakistani Press on the Prime Minister`s article. In one such report, Foreign Minister of Pakistan was quoted as having said, `we have taken due note of the statement that has been made specially by India and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the New Year eve...we are impressed by what Indian Prime Minister has said.` Notwithstanding such comments, there is no evidence of change in Pakistan`s sponsorship of cross border terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere in India.Pakistan continues to give state patronage to groups indulging in violence beyond its borders.

The Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, which are the cornerstones of our bilateral relations, commit both countries to work towards the establishment of good neighbourly relations and to settle all issues peacefully through bilateral discussions. In order to build trust and confidence, establish a stable structure of cooperation and address outstanding issues, India initiated the Composite Dialogue in 1998 which covered discussions on: (1) Peace and security, including CBMs; (2) Jammu and Kashmir; (3) Siachen; (4) Tulbul Navigation project; (5) Sir Creek; (6) Terrorism and Drug Trafficking; (7) Economic and Commercial Cooperation; and (8) Promotion of Friendly exchanges. Government have repeatedly reiterated commitment to resuming the Composite Dialogue. For this, self evidently, an appropriate atmosphere is needed. That is why we expect from Pakistan an abjurement of violence; ceasing promotion, encouragement and abetment of cross border terrorism; and a commitment to the Simla Agreement of 1972 and Lahore Declaration of 1999.